

OAC 5101:2-7-12 Site and safety requirements for a foster home.

Items to consider when assessing for water safety

Current Rule (effective July 1, 2014)

(C) Outdoor areas on the grounds of or immediately adjacent to a foster home which are potentially hazardous to a foster child placed in the home shall be reasonably safeguarded, considering the age and functioning level of the foster child. Such areas include, but are not limited to:

1. Water areas, including lakes, ponds, rivers, quarries and swimming pools.
2. Open pits and wells.
3. Cliffs and caves.
4. High-speed or heavily traveled roads.

***This language is still in the revised rule but has been moved to paragraph(E). As previously required, the home study assessor will need to continue to consider the safety of all potentially hazardous outdoor areas of a foster home. The revised rule contains more detailed requirements regarding the safety of swimming pools but does not remove other outdoor safety considerations.**

Revised Rule (effective June 2020) (B) Swimming Pools.

1. Shall have a barrier on all sides.
2. Shall have their method of access through the barrier equipped with a safety device, such as a bolt lock.
3. Shall be equipped with a life saving device, such as a ring buoy.
4. If the swimming pool cannot be emptied after each use, the pool shall have a working pump and filtering system.

Questions to assess for pool safety:

1. Is the pool above ground or in-ground?
2. As appropriate age and development, have the foster children been educated about water/pool safety while in your home? What is your plan for teaching youth who are placed in your home about water/pool safety?
3. Is there a life saving device near the pool, as required?
4. Does the pool have any other safety devices (alarm, perimeter alarm, safety cover, etc.)?
5. Does the home have a water safety plan written and shared with the recommending agency?

Specific questions based on type of pool:

A. Above ground pool:

1. Is there a barrier around the entire pool? (If the pool is not built into a deck, the sides of the pool can be the barrier **if** a removable ladder is needed to access the pool.)
2. When not in use, is the ladder to the pool removed or locked to prevent use?

3. Is the pool access equipped with a safety device to prevent entry (locked gate, fold up ladder with a lock, etc.)?
4. Are there any items (ladder, swing set, trampoline, table, etc.) around the pool that a child might climb on to gain access to the pool?
5. Is the pool emptied after each use or does it have a working pump and filter system? If the pool is not emptied after each use, how will you ensure that children are safe when they are around it?
6. Is there a cover to the pool that prevents entry?

B. In-ground pool:

1. Is there a barrier around the pool? (A fence on all four sides or a fence on three sides with the fourth side being the house are both acceptable.)
2. If there is a fence on all four sides, is the fence closed with a latch and lock to prevent entry to the pool from the outside?
3. If there is a fence on three sides, does the fence have a latch and lock to prevent entry to the pool from the outside?
4. If there is a fence on three sides, does the door in the home that allows access to the pool area have a lock, alarm or other safety device to prevent entry into the pool area? (The need for a lock or alarm on the door accessing the pool area from the home may be dependent upon the age range of the foster children for which the home is licensed.)
5. Does the pool have a working pump and filter system?
6. Does the pool have any other safety devices (alarm, perimeter alarm, safety cover, etc.)?
7. Is there a cover to the pool that prevents entry?

Documentation of the pool and water safety:

1. Describe the pool and the layout of the pool area.
2. Describe the family's ability to meet all the pool requirements included in OAC 5101:2-7-12.
3. Describe the family's rules or plan for water safety for foster children in their home.
4. Describe any preventative measures the family is using, such as, alarms on the doors, alarms on the pool, extra locks on the doors, latches for the fences, etc.
5. Based on their age, development and swimming abilities, are foster children required to attend swimming lessons?
6. Describe the family rules for access to the pool area.
 1. Do foster children need permission first?
 2. Must an adult be present?
 3. Do foster children need to wear life jackets or other flotation devices?